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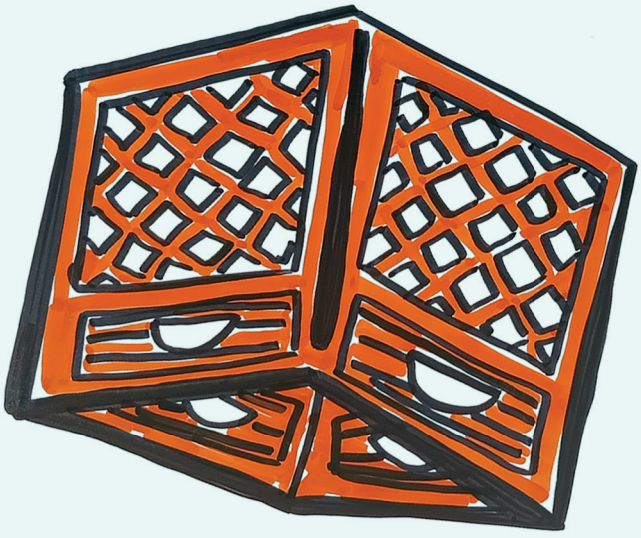
ORANGE CRATE MAGAZINE



INTERVIEW: JOE BOYD

+

ESSAYS POETRY REVIEWS

CHARLES STEELE SHYGODWIN EDWARD SAID

BENJAMIN BOOKER MAI ELTAHIR + MORE

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When the first issue of Orange Crate Magazine was released last February, it was one of four new print, art and culture publications in Philly. There was Grate Full Press, Teleporter and Tilted Zine. Maybe there were more and they just haven't reached my hands yet. Have they reached yours?

This second issue of Orange Crate Magazine is a labor of love; love for writing and reading, for music and the dreams they inspire, love for stories and the complex experiences that aren't stories yet. I thank all of the contributors who pull stories from the ether like cotton candy. You all make the world richer with your attention and artistry. And if you are someone who is working and has worked to keep art writing alive, thank you. Thank you.

Truly Truly,
Logan Cryer

hear here: mini-interviews

yuri seung

i'm endlessly fascinated by the ways we engage with our sonic environment—the feedback loop of how sound shapes us, how we shape it, and the ephemeral sound memories that linger without intent or structure. these mini-interviews explore the ambient pockets within the sonic worlds of friends and artists, focusing on sounds that haven't gone unnoticed. –yuri seung.

scan this and tell me what this sound makes you think of:

hear.here.yuri@proton.me

what's your favorite 의성어 (onomatopoeia)? and why?

i was initially going to say something simple like Thunk or Thwap just out of love of the percussive sound, but then i went back to make sure my definition of onomatopoeia was correct.

I read about Barabara (from the wiki - For instance, Japanese barabara is used to reflect an object's state of disarray or separation) and that just blows my mind...

what role does unpredictability play in how you shape sound?
I completely subscribe to and am ruled by unpredictability in my sound design and playing.. Always improv, always shifting effects and boxes and sound sources when possible... getting deep into something and then trying to get back out is the way to go for me.

being completely in the moment as well, it doesn't always lend to the cleanest of compositions and i am certainly not knocking songwriters and composers but there is something magic about things coming together in wholly new ways.

what are two unlikely sound sources you'd like to try combining?

In a current project GrGr, i have been working on with trumpeter and percussionist Greg Baynes , i am playing a heavily processed rhodes against his mutated horns and clattering delayed cymbal sputters... something about the rhodes smoothness but also the ability to twist it into nightmare sounds as well.

the more ancient project of mine, Sobbing Honey finds my compatriot fast-smashing tape loops and noise blasts against my processed oscillator and synth pads.. .trying to make dirty orchestra music for horror movies and what not. We actually have a live film score for a friends feature film coming out soon.

what's a sound you just keep chasing?
I want to find the sounds that make people close their eyes and raises hairs on your arms... i think some of that comes from the actual physicality of the sound system, so something really loud and full but not painful...

Grant Capes, sound engineer and musician, thrower of shows.

what's your favorite onomatopoeia? and why?

One of my favorites is "설렘." It mimics the gentle flutter of a heartbeat and beautifully captures the innocence and purity of that emotion. As a native Korean word, its delicate nuance resonates deeply with me.

what's a sound you grew up hearing that you no longer hear, and what feelings does its absence evoke?

I miss hearing my mom's voice waking me up or calling me to come eat. Now that I live in the U.S. and she's back in Korea, even the scolding tones I used to find annoying feel warm and comforting in memory.

what qualities of sound are you most drawn to when playing the 가야금 (gayageum)?

What drew me in was the way I could shape the sound directly through touch — bending the pitch, adding subtle techniques, and expressing emotion through my fingertips. The physical contact with the strings creates an intimacy that makes each sound feel alive.

are there particular tunings or playing techniques that bring out unexpected textures or tones?

One of my favorite experiments is placing chopsticks between the strings, which gives the silk strings a metallic edge. Depending on where I place them, I can alter the pitch and texture, creating an unexpected blend of soft, rounded tones and sharp, piercing sounds.

DoYeon Kim, Gayageum player, Composer, Improviser, Vocalist and Educator.

what's your favorite onomatopoeia? and why?

snap. its a satisfying sound in almost every context, often is associated with a cool physical feeling and i like how it can act as an urgent or a subtle sound depending on its usage.

what piece of gear do you feel most connected to, and what makes that relationship so special?

i guess i quite literally feel the most connected to my touch-sensitive cv controller. it has allowed me to do what i do in a way i never considered before and adds a human element to a medium that is historically generative.

how have you used volume—whether loudness or softness—to influence how meaning is perceived?

loud blasts convey urgency, intensity and abrasiveness. softer, more subtle sounds create a sense of intricacy and delicacy that can lend to a specific mood. volume swells can create an almost overwhelming vibe.

how does your sense of your body in a space change once you've filled with sound?
during loud, harsh, hard-panned parts it feels as if im being squeezed by the stereo field. during quiet or silent parts its a stark reminder of being in front of however many people in a room and having to sit with whatever physical sensations those bring up ranging from total calm and collectedness to deep anxiety.

samantha hernandez, vixen of voltage, purveyor of potentiometers

RADICAL INTERPRETATIONS:
EDWARD SAID AND MUSICAL LIBERATION

STEPH DAVIES

Last year I read Edward Said's books obsessively in an effort to comprehend the violence I saw committed against Palestinians every day. Said's influential work continues to shape the international struggle for Palestinian liberation. In his critical writings, he labored to interpret Western thought against the histories it tried to exclude: its own colonial origins and the subjectivities of its non-Western victims. Said sometimes described this method as "contrapuntal," a metaphor he derived from the musical technique of harmonizing multiple, interlocking voices. It was a metaphor he arrived at through a lifetime of reflection on classical music.

Said approached music as an amateur pianist and his non-specialist background made him sensitive to the social, interdisciplinary features of the art form often ignored in musicology. Said was uniquely attentive to the historical baggage of the classical tradition, particularly its relationship with European imperialism. But he wrote about this tradition with a deep love and an insistent belief in the interpretive power of musical performance.

In an attuned, original performance, Said recognized the potential to interrogate a composer's ideas through music itself. Opera was exemplary for him in this regard, because its dramatic, musical and textual elements could be cast in evocative tension. Operatic texts could also pose especially urgent interpretive problems. This was particularly true of the operas of Richard Wagner, whose personal antisemitism and symbolic role in Nazism made any realization of his work inherently problematic. In contemporary performances of Wagner's operas, Said often found the sort of radical interpretation that he advocated. He singled out for praise the 1976 centennial production of Der Ring des Nibelungen, which restaged the mythological saga in Wagner's own 19th century, as an allegory for the rise and fall of capitalism.

Wagner also inspired some of Said's most explicit statements on music and politics. In a 2001 essay, "Barenboim and the Wagner Taboo", Said weighed in on the longstanding, unspoken prohibition on Wagner's music in Israel, after it had been violated in a concert by Daniel Barenboim. While recognizing the traumatic history informing the Wagner ban, Said nonetheless condemned it as an irrational act of denial; one directed not against the problematic composer, but against those artists capable of setting his work in dialogue with the Israeli present. To refuse any performance of Wagner within Israel's borders was, in Said's view, to refuse the possibility of historical understanding.

Said challenges us to think of music as another form of political activity, a site where we question, interpret, and transform the history we inherit. This deconstructive logic runs counter to entrenched debates about the politics of consumption, and imagines far greater agency in the act of listening. Around the time I read Said, I also returned to Wagner's music, which I've loved, yet often disavowed, since I encountered it as a composition student. Listening to Wagner in counterpoint with Said, this vexing, cathartic music, inextricable from the atrocity of the Holocaust, seemed suddenly to become a figure for my own anguished role as a witness to genocide, one living in a nation profoundly implicated in the destruction of Gaza. It was a transformative experience for me, through which I began to understand, and actually feel, my complicity and agency within a tragic history.

Such understanding was, in Said's view, the precondition to any liveable future, in Palestine and beyond. His music writing offers a model for the sort of rigorous curiosity that allows our own histories, as musicians, artists, and political agents, to yield insight from tragedy. Said wrote about music as part of a lifelong struggle to liberate the homeland to which he'd never return. For us reading him today, music can be a practice in which that struggle continues to resound.

Suggested Readings
(available at the Free Library)

Musical Elaborations, 1991.

Out of Place: A Memoir. 2000.

On Late Style: Music and Literature against the Grain. 2006.

"Barenboim and the Wagner Taboo" in Music At the Limits, 2008.

Said On Opera. 2024.

Exhibitions,
Events,
Books,
Other Books,
Non Books,
Anti Books,
Pseudo Books,
Quasi Books,
Concrete Books,
Conceptual Books,
Structural Books,
Project Books,
Plain Books,
Multiples,
Posters,
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Objects

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REVIEW: *My heart makes my head swim* AT VOX POPULI

TAKIA MICHAEL

mai eltahir presents *My heart makes my head swim* to show the effects that preserving and rebuilding remembrance have on Black existence within the post-colonial world. Philadelphia-based artists Jonathan González and Karyn Olivier are joined together in an exhibition illustrating the complexity in connecting to one's past. Whether sourcing familiar objects or bringing attention to elements beyond physical presentation, both artists are bridging the gap between the past and present. The viewer then creates a new relationship with one's history when it coexists with the now, emphasizing the connection between loss and post-colonial trauma.

González's photographs are of liminal spaces, conveying feelings of a great absence. This absence is told through images depicting desolate buildings, parks, and street corners. Some photographs lack a distinct subject and have subtle shadows, while others are black and white images with layered lights and shadows. González is highlighting that sense of loss with these fading figures. Some photos come with instructions on engaging with the works with your body. They ask the audience to make a hum, or to concentrate on the natural sound of their surroundings like footsteps and white noises. González invites the viewer to engage with the photographs beyond their frames. All the photographs are multi-layered visually and metaphysically, and show the connection between the body and the past.

Working through sculptural forms, Olivier arranges found materials to birth new meanings and memorialize the past. In the gallery, a wire was installed across the room about four feet off the ground, and a pile of clothes hangs towards one end. From the weight of the clothes, the wire hangs just low enough that it forces you to duck under to move around the space. In the corner, a plexiglass with a faint image of empty chairs printed onto it is nested into blue sand. The transparency of the plexiglass is a literal tool where history and the current existence are seen at the same time. Now the mundane objects are transformed into memorials, giving the viewer a moment to reevaluate their relationship to these objects; mirroring the past and the present

Through deep reflection, *My heart makes my head swim* depicts the complicated relationship between the past and post-colonial afterlife. González and Olivier's works act as vessels, bringing historical experiences and current experiences to coexist with each other. *My heart makes my head swim* breaks the gap, and rebuilds itself through an introspection of how one's post-colonial trauma is intertwined with the now.

INTERVIEW WITH JOE BOYD

AARON GUTTENPLAN

Joe Boyd is a legendary figure in popular music whose early career highlights include working sound at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival when Dylan went electric and producing a number of classics from the British folk rock movement like Nick Drake's *Five Leaves Left*, Fairport Convention's *Liege & Lief* and the Incredible String Band's *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter.*

In 2006, he covered this period of his career in his memoir White Bicycles: Making Music in the 1960s. Last year, he published his second book, the 900+ page And the Roots of Rhythm Remain: A Journey through Global Music, which, while not a memoir, mines a later period of his career. In the 1980s, as founder and head of Hannibal Records, he was at the forefront of the world music movement, releasing albums ranging from the Malian desert blues of Ali Farka Touré to the Bulgarian vocal folk of Trio Bulgarka. He was part of the meeting that coined that controversial marketing term, "world music"—which he recounts, alongside discussing the term's successes and failures, in the book. Largely, though, the book is not focused on Boyd's experiences but on the tangled web of musical history. He recounts for a Western audience how the diverse global sounds that have become popular and influenced our own music made their ways into our collective consciousness over the years.

I met Boyd at Big Ears Festival this year and interviewed him when he came to Philadelphia to promote the paperback release of Roots of Rhythm. He has a more casual and conversational tone than one might expect from such an experienced and knowledgeable figure, but as he mentions in our conversation, he has a knack for feeling at home in various cultures and environments. That's likely why he seems equally adept at discussing Afro-Cuban rhythms as Romani music. He could talk about these topics for hours—at Big Ears, he discussed them for two, and clearly could have gone on for two more—so I was grateful to get a few minutes with him.

Intreview has been edited for length and clarity.

You published White Bicycles almost 20 years ago, and you've said you didn't want to write the 1970s sequel, and instead wrote Roots of Rhythm. I'm interested as to why you chose to write not just on a different topic, but also a book that is much less personal and a more scholarly endeavor than White Bicycles.

I didn't have a very good '70s. A lot of things I tried to do didn't work. There was nothing in that period that connected to a greater historical arc the way my experience of the '60s did. And I've never limited my listening to people singing in English. I've always liked music from everywhere. But most of the great books that we see in an English language bookstore about music are about Anglo-American music, jazz, blues, pop music, whatever. I felt there was a vacuum in people writing in that same engaging way about the music from afar that has come to us and shaped our own music. I focused on styles of music that people know. Samba, reggae, salsa, Eastern European so-called "Gypsy music," Indian music, tango.

I felt, here's an opportunity to take music that is familiar to people, but they have very little information about who these artists were that created this music, where it comes from sociologically, politically, historically.

I didn't realize it was going to take 17 years

to finish, but I just set out on that path and pretty much stuck to the structure and concept of the book that I first had.

Going back to White Bicycles, and tying into something recent–you were on the soundboard at Newport 1965. I'm probably not the first to ask, but how did you feel about the depiction of that in "A Complete Unknown"?

I was very impressed with the film. Obviously when I first heard about it, I was very skeptical. They played a bit fast and loose with some of the facts. But it's a film. You have to make the script work. I thought the whole thing was very well done. I did a long interview with Elijah Wald for that book [Dylan Goes Electric!] and some of the things that I mentioned, you see up there on the screen. Things like the African American work group, the axes, the confrontation between [Peter] Yarrow and [Pete] Seeger and [Alan] Lomax.

Your name first appeared on my radar because I'm a big fan of Richard Thompson. This is an artist you've produced as part of a band [Fairport Convention], in a duo with his then-wife, as Richard & Linda Thompson, and then as a solo artist. What's it like to work with an artist like Richard Thompson in different capacities like that?

Richard was always great to work with. It wasn't like you had to struggle and patch together solos. He would play great solos and he was a terrific artist and he was, in a way, the reason I signed Fairport [Convention]. After Sandy [Denny] joined and they evolved as a group, they became, together, a wonderful group. But when I first heard them, Richard played "East-West," [the Paul Butterfield Blues Band piece] which Mike Bloomfield had put together. And I just thought, *this is a big mistake. You're just 17 years old. Why are you trying to take on this incredible statement from Bloomfield?* And Richard destroyed it, he was fantastic. He played great and I just went, wow, this is a guy I want to work with. So the link between Fairport and Richard & Linda and Richard's solo work for me is Richard. I adore Linda and her singing. But, in a way, he's the force that I always would be ready to work with.

I assumed for the longest time that you were British because you have all these credits on British folk rock records. But, of course, you're American and you first moved to London in the '60s.

Since moving there in '65, there's only been two years when I didn't have a place in London.

So what has it been like as an American to live in London most of your life?

I love London. You would read interviews with Americans living in London who would complain about the British being standoffish or something like that, but I was fortunate. I always just fell in with musicians and people who were interested in the same things I was, and it felt really comfortable. I've always loved going back and forth between cultures. When I was writing this book, my wife was doing environmental work in the Balkans, and so we had a flat in Tirana, Albania, and a lot of the book was written in Tirana. I feel very at home there. I love Tirana.

Hannibal released a lot of British folk rock, but it also released a lot of world music, which leads into your new book. What made you decide to start this company, and then to release world music?

I spent a lot of the '70s trying to be a film producer with a sideline in record production. And by 1980, I'd gotten fed up with the film industry. I felt like it was so much angst and work to try and get a project off the ground. I craved the experience of having an idea, taking some artists into the studio, spending three days making an LP, and having it out in three months. It just seemed like that was so much better as a model of how to be creative in the commercial world.

So that was what propelled me back into the record business. I felt there was a gap. Major companies were going for disco. The kind of artists they had been signing in the mid-'70s were no longer getting deals.

And so Chris Blackwell and I had this idea that I could start a label that was more designed for Richard Thompson or Taj Mahal or Kate McGarrigle, these kind of artists who were looking for a home.

But by the middle '70s there were so many new singer-songwriters and groups coming out and the first few things we put out were much easier to market than the unknown singer-songwriter, for example. And so we switched. We turned more into the direction of international music and were a key part of that whole world music scene. And that, as you say, led to the book.

DEATH AND THE ACTOR
PROSPERJOE (FKA JOESTRADAMUS)

PROLOGUE
Such an earlier Duke croons (1976):
"Here are we, one magical moment
Such is the stuff from where dreams are woven."
This is a very scurvy tune to sing,
Jumping station turnstiles,
Malkuth (material world) to Kether (godhead)
Can it be done? Should it even be dreamed?
Can a mime? Or an actor? Can Ziggy?

Whatever the case (or cause), here you are
Your revels ended, a most auspicious star (Cancer)
Those actors (Major Tom etc.) are melted into air
With nothing left to lose
With skull designs upon your shoes
Stranded on an Island, in a cave
Every third thought your grave. (Manhattan, 2016)

Shakespeare, so too, he needed the mage
In throes of some terminal farewell to the stage.
This last character – Prospero
The Right Duke, Prospero Magus, Prospero Sinistram
For who but Prospero could perform this final gambit?
(Pirate Jack? Major Tom? Poor Tom? Lear? Hamlet?)
Could, dying, dredge the ocean, summon such sheets of rain
Could, once more, push their backs against the grain?
Could plague them all again and again
With dancing?

SCENE
[Enter Prospero in his magic robes]

Incants:
"In the villa of Ormen stands a solitary candle…"
[He holds forth a book with a familiar symbol
It spews black stardust]
A premonitory spell, this rough magic
(experimental jazz quartet)
Some heavenly music
Which paves the way, sets things in motion
(cited: Death Grips, Kendrick)
Drawn in outline, nots, his coming progeny
Not: a gang—
a Marvel—
a wandering—
a white—
—star
But the Star of Stars:

★

Track two, the magus gathers etheric energy
"WOO!
WOO!"
But his greedy old fingers flip to another,
A necromantic spell titled ˜LAZARUS˜
(Cancer Reversus)

Speaks:
"Look up here, I'm in heaven"
So much for necromancy.
Perhaps he's learned, really, "We are such stuff as dreams are…." etc.

But no matter— the matter is, has always been, his revenge
On us his foes, now wandering this desolate isle of noises, sounds, and sweet airs.
A certain "looking for your ass"

Pronounces:
A season of crime, lingering perdition
High charms, fits, Nadsat assaults
"Deng, deng, viddy, viddy"
All knit up in distractions. We now are in his power.
And still, in that book, two spells remain.

INTERMISSION
I can answer why
The dying artist needs be Prospero,
Not because of his magick, his charms, sigils, scrolls,
The artist, of course, already has all those
He needs be Prospero for what Prospero does last
It's that original choice, to destroy or to create,
Prospero Reconciler, look—

–Now does his project gather to a head.
[Pages rustle, cue piano, guitar, bass,
cue saxophone, cue drums]

Says Bowie, after all:
"I've got no enemies."
Says Shakespeare:
"Go, release them."
Says Bowie:
"I'm walking down."
Says Shakespeare:
"I'll break my staff
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book."
And says Bowie:
"If I'll never see, the English evergreens I'm running to
It's nothing to me.
I'm dying, too."

[Solemn music.]

EPILOGUE
Spoken by Prospero

Something's very wrong
I can't give everything away.
Release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands.
Or else my project fails,
Which was
Seeing more and feeling less
Saying no, but meaning yes
This is all I ever meant

[He exits]

ALBUM REVIEW: *LOWER* BY BENJAMIN BOOKER

TOM BAUMSER

When Benjamin Booker debuted in 2014, the indie rock cognoscenti dubbed him a garage/blues wunderkind off the back of a Jack White co-sign. However on Booker's latest album *LOWER,* he sheds his traditionalist skin by consciously corrupting his sound with a production assist from underground hip-hop architect, Kenny Segal. The only vestige he retains of his previously up-tempo and warm compositions is his soulful, eternally hoarse voice; everything else has been replaced or supplemented by shoegaze distortion, programmed electronica, and musique concrete. It's still a rock album, though one that positions itself, like many other records, as a turn away from an expected sound due to an almost dissociative brush with the traumas of daily life.

At album three and age 35, Booker's core has been dismantled. His belief in belief itself as a tool of survival is snuffed out, leaving only a cynical realism in the ash. The album opens with the sarcastic and paranoid "BLACK OPPS", a guitar + beats driven song about COINTELPRO's lethal and extrajudicial prerogatives, which cracks open into a surprising roar of a chorus.

There's a nocturnal, distorted quality to the sonics here, especially on tracks like the "LWA IN THE TRAILER PARK" and "HOPE FOR THE NIGHT TIME". His dark night of the soul is supplemented by his increasingly documentarian-like eye for details; "POMPEII STATUES" starts with an out of tune guitar riff that finally locks in when his trek starts. Along the way, there's children begging, a city burning, and a guitarron playing. There's filler though, "SPEAKING WITH THE DEAD" is a padded interlude that is style over substance, an almost acapella vocal take followed by ambient dread that doesn't signify as anything other than a time killer. Overall, he accomplishes what he sets out to do: break himself down and unearth the void.

STEELE AT HOME: A PROFILE ON PHILADELPHIA'S DIY COMEDY SCENE

TAFARI ROBERTSON

Charles Steele (insta: @paula.on.her.deen) is a Philadelphia-based Black Comedian & Curator, born in Strawberry Mansion and grew up in northeast Philadelphia. Now he's a self-ascribed "rogue moon," performing and curating alternative comedy shows across Philadelphia.

photo by Benjamin Lazzaro

How do you describe your comedy? Is there a genre or style of comedy that you claim?

Storytelling. I wish I had more of a penchant for one liners or social commentary —you don't want to have to mine your personal life all the time — but that's the stuff I gravitate towards a lot and just what comes natural.

Where do you get your sense of humor from?

The women in my family, first and foremost. My grandmother was very funny and a great storyteller. My mother was the same way. I have four aunts so I spent a lot of time around them. As far as comedians, I watch a lot. I definitely have some favorites but I constantly consume stand up whether I like the person's comedy or not, just out of curiosity. I feel like other stand ups don't watch as much stand up as I do. I was a comedy nerd in high school. I'm thrifting today and I just got some old comedy records; I got some Sid Caesar, he's a comic from the 30s.

What is your comedy landscape?

I've lived in Philly my whole life. The scene here has changed a lot since I've been doing it. It was very reflective of the change in the general comedy landscape on a national or global scale. I'd say ten years ago it was a lot more of the liberal leaning, alternative comic, the queer comic, you would see in the forefront. Now it's turned more to the alt-right comics as the people at the forefront. The mainstream has kind of flipped.That happened in the local scene too.

We used to have a space called Good Good Comedy Theater which was all the weirdos, the alternative comics, where the queer comics would be and now that's closed. The stuff that's come up since the pandemic has been the niggas that want to be on like Kill Tony or be on Joe Rogan one day - them type bouls.

It used to be that you had to go through certain channels. Back when I first started, they would have a Comedy Central showcase over at Good Good and it was like, *Oh, maybe if I do really good*

this year and they like me at Good Good. Then you can get on that showcase and then you do their festival and try to get opportunities that way.

Now, in the best way, everything is in the hands of the creators. I feel like I know a lot more people now who have their own fan base just from putting things out themselves, independently or with friends. There's less official channels to get to success.

What goes into curating a comedy show? What are your main considerations?

Personal taste, booking my friends; if any booker says they're not booking their friends they're lying. Also just what's needed for a certain event. A lot of time I have a theme so I think of who feel is more suited for something. I did a Halloween show where everyone had to do their version of the Joker and had to do five minutes as whatever their take was on that character so I chose people who did improv or sketch or were more suited to doing character comedy. Sometimes it's who would fit for this and then just who I like, what's funny, what's fresh.

Do you have specific messages or aspirations for the comedy spaces you create?

I'm always trying to do what's interesting to me at the moment. I have trouble with long term thinking, so I'm thinking of what I'm wanting to do in the next couple of months.

What's the legacy are you participating in? Do you feel like there are any dots you're connecting?

I was talking about this with a friend the other night, my man, Ron Metellus, he's a comedian and tv writer from Philly. We don't have a bunch of stand up out anywhere. I definitely want to put out more stand up into the world. I've been very precious with releasing things. That's another thing with the comedy landscape, there's so many more specials being released than when I started, so I'm trying to leave some more things behind.

I want to put out a vinyl record because I feel like not many people do it who aren't big acts. That's an aspiration of mine. I have a record collection of old comedy records from the 60s that I nerd out on.

I definitely want to leave behind a record or a special but other than that, I'm pretty satisfied with living a regular life. I've seen it change some people's life for the worse when they got a little

with living a regular life. I've seen it change some people's life for the worse when they got a little more notoriety.

Philly has had a very big impact in the last ten years on stand up as a whole and not always for the better because some people are very big comedians and have those bro-y white dude audiences. Everything is so politicized, so I feel like a lot of the people who have come out of the scene have unfortunately been a part of the movement that has pushed the American populace kind of to the right. I don't think it's always intentional but it has been used as a tool for the conservatives in this country so that part sucks.

As far as the DIY scene, there's a lot of good people in this city who are doing really cool things: Kelsey McKee, Two Locals: Nicole Phoenix and Zoe Dixon. There's actually a lot of stuff going on! A lot of it is "if you know you know" but there's a lot of small comedy shows in the city.

If someone is interested in getting into the comedy scene, how do you describe that process from a comedian/artist perspective?

If you want to do comedy just look up open mics and just go; write 5 minutes and just start immediately. Don't give it a second thought. The one good thing about comedy is that there's no barrier to entry.

From an audience perspective, check out: Two Locals, Out of Pocket Comedy and The Comedy Jawn on Mondays is free at The Saint

What do you want people to know about or where you're at?

I guess that I'm a person who, as a curator, is very intentional about the environments I want to create at my shows. I feel like a lot of people can put on a good show and have funny people but I think you can speak to the atmosphere at a show.

When I did a house show at my apartment and had home cooked food, everybody got a plate, I had the DJ in the house. A lot of times people will come up to me and they'll talk about a show not even in the context of a show like, "Remember when we were hanging out at your crib" and I'm like, "Yeah that was a show too."

I'm a person who's just trying to do things that I haven't seen before and give people new experiences. I'm just trying my best.

TWO ENTRIES FROM LANE TIMOTHY SPEIDEL'S STUDIO LOG (UNEDITED)

Regarding their band Saggy. 4/29 is about practice, 5/3 is about a performance at Big Ramp Gallery at the opening of AIR ALONE (in my dream) an exhibition with work by Kim Altomare and Melina Ausikaitis. Drawings by Pomona Za.

JS = Jim Strong
MR = Molly/Russel Thayer

Studio Log 4/29/25

BIG day yesterday - Saggy "practice" we decided our new concept is changed from "no rehearsal" to "everything is practice". I think MR did enjoy playing w/ us - I hope that they aren't too fixated on that it will be the same straight thru - w/ JS's ice cream at the end. We played Body Building, One Day, (maybe another?) & then 2/3 new ones that kind of intertwined under the heading "I'm writing you a letter"- w/ one I freestyled off of this weird poem I wrote where I'm talking about forgetfulness & people telling you things about yourself that you don't remember. So I read/spoke that while playing w/ the "pearl drop" setting on MR's keyboard. The whole time I was singing - playing keyboard on & off & drumming. I was surprised how fluidly it went for me if I didn't think too hard about it. I was also singing lower pretty confidently which felt really good. We also did a completely new & improvised melody/lyric I came up w/ "You can never disappoint me/You have nothing to apologize for". Which we harmonized w/ & around which was really satisfying. Then I tried to "sign" the letter, "Sincerely," singing kind of higher & saying "are you a child or not." I got shy I think to say "you are a child of god." Which maybe I'll try, ah!

Studio Log 5/3/25

I think the thing is that the Saggy Show is/are a lesson in presence for ME (not just the audience or something). It's a project in presence for ME. In accepting the past, remaining in the struggle to be present - in accepting there are no mistakes & there is no need to apologize. & also in the practice of it that it's almost not a performance - it's an ongoing practice of presence, there is no character - there is ideally no "self" as in the regular one we put on. The fear, anxiety, regret, confusion, wonder, joy, it's all part of that, there is no need to critique it or become upset by it. What is there to say? I've felt lost, I've found this, I'm confused, no I'm not, now I'm terrified, now I'm loved? The grief of time, the thrill of discovery, all of us holding each other loosely. The doing is the doing of it. It is the medicine, not the sickness. It is safety, it is friendship. Even though it feels scary sometimes like JS says "it's all part of it."

YAWN. Ding! Wahhhhhh…. I'm writing you a letter…
There are no wrong sounds ▪

YAUNAS

MASON MCAVOY

Six into throwing 'cross the land
he'd stood searching for a patient string
with a resonance that would start a flood
for now, he had the tambourine

Yaunas wandered to me
faithless in a forest of dogs
he picked up a tambourine lain dead in the wood
and hushed my swelled breath

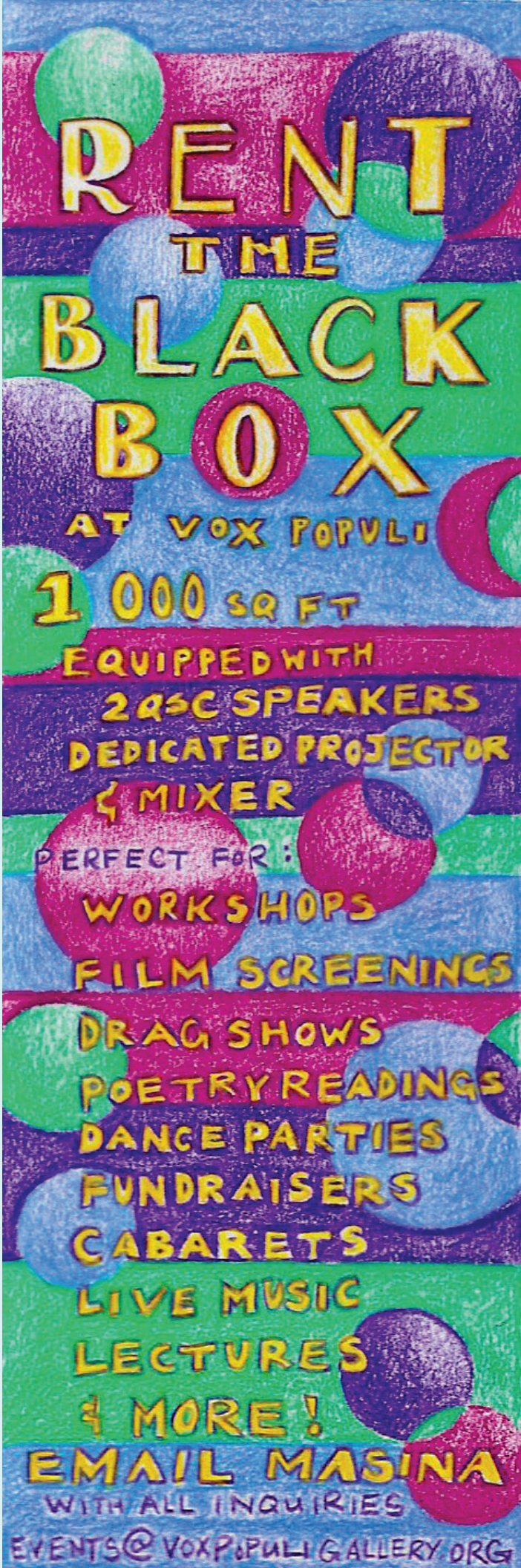
Early in the brick he'd placed
a stoney island rife with fog
a window begged for decoration
a living for which to be seen

Yaunas tossed the tangled shore out like skipping stones
And there the thin clear thread becomes
the tidal rush to the chest

Morning rises in direction,
like sway given to hand
Cast in tin can connection
to make music with the land
To run across again

Should he have struck the sunset
It would sound a major chord
Lain bare upon the shore

A young patience floats
Delighted by the waves
Toothless as a windchime



INTERVIEW WITH SHYGODWIN

LOGAN CRYER

Philly's own ShyGodwin are rising stars of the punk and hardcore scene. Led by Jasmine Godwin and Ly Woods, ShyGodwin leads with a dedicated work ethic, uncompromising politics, contagious laughter and drip. (You see the photo!) Their next Philly show takes place June 14th at Kung Fu Necktie with The Angies and What Are The Odds.

Logan Cryer
Ly Woods
Jasmine Godwin

photo by Uv Lucas

How did you all end up in Philly?

Jasmine was already in Philly, and I was in California. I had to leave my house, so I was like, fuck it. You know what, I'll go to the East Coast. Plus, most of my friends or people that I know were on the East Coast, because I went to boarding school and I went to undergrad over this way. So everybody that I've known since high school is over here. It was an easy move.

We were in LA in 2020 because we were living with Lee's mom and then we were in San Francisco in 2021.

We were here, and then we moved. We were like, "let's move somewhere new."

So we moved to Albuquerque.

We lived in Albuquerque for a few months.

And then the pandemic. I went back to Jersey.

And I went back to California.

And then I went to California with you, and then-

We both came to Jersey. Because we're together, we've been in a relationship before we started the band. We decided to start the band in the pandemic, but we've been together since 2018. But the band happened when the pandemic happened.

We didn't play a show until 2022. End of 2022.

Yeah. It was two years of making websites and just doing stuff, thinking of stuff. Even us wearing the suits and stuff, I don't even think we would have gotten to that point if we had started and just started playing shows right away. I think because we had time to visualize,what would it look like when we're eventually in the beginning, for the first couple years, we would rehearse with tracks. Now that we're busier, it's like, okay, we probably wouldn't have the time to dedicate to really thinking about, what do we want to represent visually? And how do we want to tell our story? It was a pandemic, but also we were living with my mom, and it was a very volatile situation. It was just not a good place to be. So we used her garage as our hub, and we would sit in that garage-

For hours.

And mind you, this is Southern California, so it's not like it gets that cold. But because it was this insulated, crappy ass garage, we would just sit in there freezing our asses off just coming up with songs, thinking about visuals and videos and stuff. My sister is a writer and a director, and she's been doing that for a really long time, so she has a lot of friends in the industry. And because we were in LA, we were like, *okay, maybe we can tap into some of her friends and see if they can make us some cool shit*. And that was actually really good too, because we did connect with

some people who did make us some really cool shit. But we realized, yeah, it's not really us. We want to do more DIY, we want to do things that we don't want to be beholden to somebody else because they have all the good equipment, but then they're not listening to our story or what we want to convey.

In that time when you were first forming the band, how long did it take to realize the sound you were going for?

I feel like we were really wanting to do heavy music. That was definitely the starting point. And I think at the time we both were listening to a lot of grunge. We started getting into more just more hardcore sounds, punk sounds and very quick, fast, high energetic songs that are heavy still. We grew up listening to a bunch of different types of music and I used to listen to a lot of emo music and stuff, even had the bangs.

Oh, my God, yes. She had an emo swoop. It was amazing.

I think that helped us shape the sound of it all. A mix of punk, grunge, hardcore. Yeah, some emo vibes. It's moody. Yeah. What do you think?

We both really wanted to make heavy music. We both really loved heavy music, but never really saw a path for that. Especially not being able to do it with another Black person. In terms of the sound itself, I would say for my part it's really recent that I feel like we've hit this, *okay, this is our sound* thing. I do still feel like there's room for evolution. But I think ability-wise, when we first started, in terms of the vocals and the melodies, we were more of a pop punk lane where I would do more singing than screaming. And I really wanted that to be flipped where it was more screaming than singing kind of thing, but I just didn't know how to do it. Physically I didn't know how to scream. So that took time.

In terms of the music too, because it just was us in the beginning, I was creating the drums on a midi and programming the drums. Then when we were playing shows and stuff, it was very freeing to play with drummers who are able to interpret what the demo is and to make it make sense in real life. That was really a huge push forward in terms of the sound, because then I didn't really have to compromise my ideas so much to make it. We're playing with some really great drummers so they can play what I'm making. It makes the sound very true to where it started in terms of the demos.

As far as having bass players and drummers, are you typically working with the same people again an again?

Our bass player has been the same since we started playing with a bass player. We play with Jaz, her handle's @jaznextlevel. She's amazing. We've been playing with her for about a little over a year now. And then drummer-wise, we have been playing with a mix. Drummers are hard. So we have a little bit of a rotation though.

Do you all have a dream, either gig or tour or venue, or someone you want to open for?

Oh, my gosh, there's so many people.

Maybe say the most embarrassing one?

Okay, I will say that this is the most embarrassing one because I'm such a fan girl. I would love to open or go on tour with Lady Gaga. Lady Gaga, for real. No fucking joke. Lady Gaga, I went to see when I was in high school. I went with my sister. And that was the first concert that I'd ever been in the pit for. And it was just the gays and the gals and everybody was out, and I was still baby gay. What really struck me about her show was just the fact that she didn't care about being pretty. It was about, I'm here to give you a show. A lot of times when I put on makeup to perform, it will run down my face because I'm such a sweaty person. And Lady Gaga was the first woman artist that I had seen who was sweating.

Someone embarrassing. I guess that's not that embarrassing, but I would totally open for Creed or any band that Mark Tremonti is in. He's such a great guitarist, and that would be amazing. That and Joan Jett. Joan Jett is a little embarrassing too, in a wholesome way, I guess.

When you started being a part of the music scene, who were some bands that really inspired you?

I definitely feel inspired by Soul Glo. I think in terms of the Philly energy and repping Philly and having the support of the city, I feel like Soul Glow is very much like that. And it's exciting to see people behind Black fronted punk band is very cool to see. To be honest, I think more than even excited about certain bands, I think certain venues have been very inspiring. Moving to Philly in 2018, discovering that for myself was really exciting. Going to the Fillmore or going to Union Transfer — and I know those are bigger venues but those are venues where you start to feel like these are artists who are really breaking through. We saw Doja Cat at the Foundry before she blew up. I think the venues more than anything have really inspired me personally in Philly. I don't know.

The Haven, that was an awesome venue. Which the people that they brought out all the time were very super cool, super respectful, had a great ass time. It was always a great time. The DIY scene is very empowering too. And motivating for us to definitely keep going and doing it. And it shows that we can do it ourselves, and that there is so much that can be done with ourselves. And not just ourselves, but the community around us and surrounding us.

Yeah, because everybody helps. Everybody supports.

What's that thing called? What's that saying? Rising tide floats all boats.

FRI • 5.23
KENGCHAKAJ
8PM

2*25

FRI, AUG. 15
YU SU
8:00 PM

MARS KUMARI
FRI • JUL. 11 • 8PM

SOUND TYPE

YOU NAKAI
FRI • SEP 26 • 8PM

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